

Amendment to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Replace paragraph [0003] with the following paragraph:

[0003] A search engine is a program that searches documents in web sites for specified keywords and returns a list of documents where keywords were found. Typically, a search engine works by sending out spiders to automatically fetch documents in web sites and feed back to the search engine. It is called a spider because it “crawls” over the web. The search engine then reads these documents and creates indexes based on its proprietary algorithm. Due to inherent limitation of the proprietary algorithms employed by search engines, some related web sites may be neglected. After receiving a query, the search engine in fact searches the indexes rather than going out to direct search web sites again. As a result, some search results are not the latest information, although spiders periodically send back information to update indexes. In addition, concurrently searching a plurality of databases is available in the prior art.

Please replace paragraph [0033] with the following paragraph:

[0033] At step 430, patent databases are searched to collect first tier reference patents that cite or are cited by patents satisfying conditions of the search query. Using the aforementioned search query, for example, the first tier reference patents are patents that cite or are cited by IBM's patents issued after 1 January 2002. In other words, the first tier reference patents are patents having forward citation relationship or backward citation relationship with IBM's patents issued after 1 January 2002.